



LYNDON

BURKETT

Ernest Benson



A. D. BURKETT

Lyndon

By

A. D. Burkett

Press of
Jennings & Graham
Cincinnati

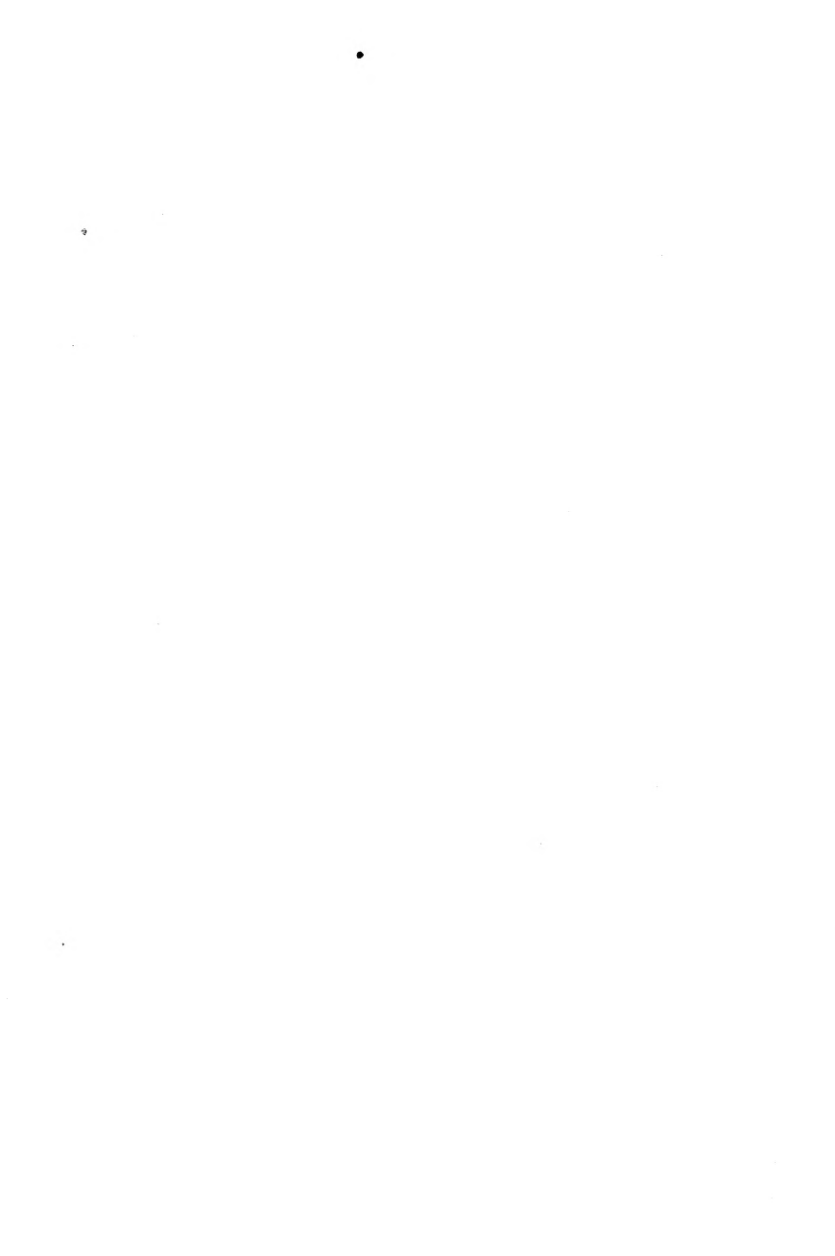
Copyright, 1908,
by
A. D. BURKETT

Dedicated:

*To those who may care to read slowly,
Or sit by a river and dream,
Or listen to stars and to sunlight,
And interpret the seen by the unseen.*



As the Memory of Those that We Love



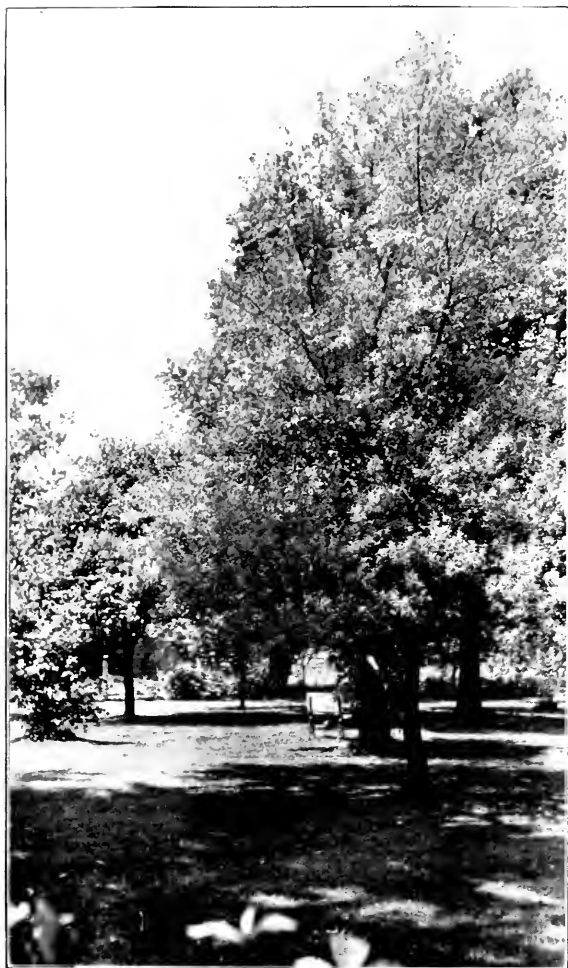
Contents

EXORDIUM,	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
SUNRISE,	-	-	-	-	-	-	19
THE RIVER,	-	-	-	-	-	-	29
MILL RUINS,	-	-	-			-	47
THE BELLS,	-	.	-	-	-	-	55
THE CLOUDS,	-	-	-	-	-		65
LATE IN THE AFTERNOON,					-	-	69
SUNSET,	-	-	-		-	-	73

List of Illustrations

TITLE	ARTIST	PAGE
1. A. D. BURKETT, - - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
2. AS THE MEMORY OF THOSE THAT WE LOVE, - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	7
3. AND THE OLIVES—SILENT WATCHERS, - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	13
4. SUNRISE, - - - -	<i>F. A. Bell</i>	17
5. THE BRIDGE THAT SPANS TO EITHER SIDE, - - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	23
6. THE RIVER, - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	27
7. AS THE LIVES OF MEN AND OF WOMEN, - - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	33
8. THESE HAVE STOOD UPRIGHT,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	35
9. FLOATING LIKE RAFTS IN THE RIVER, - - - -	<i>Sophie Parmenter</i>	39

TITLE	ARTIST	PAGE
10. MIDSUMMER MUSIC,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	41
11. HIDDEN BY UNDERGROWTHS,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	45
12. WHERE ONCE WAS THE ROAR OF INDUSTRY - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	49
13. IN CHILDHOOD'S EARLY MORN WE HEARD THEM CALL,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	53
14. HOW SWEET THEIR TONES,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	57
15. THAT SPIRIT VOICE—THE BELLS,	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	59
16. THEY ARE OUR FRIENDS, - - -		63
17. LATE IN THE AFTERNOON,	<i>Mattie Parmenter</i>	67
18. A PLACE OF PEACE, -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	71
19. FLOWERS ON THE INDIAN'S GRAVE	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	75
20. ASLEEP TILL THE DAWN OF THE DAY, - - -	<i>F. C. Barnum</i>	77



And the Olives—Silent Watchers

Exordium

Listen, heart, while old Rock River,
As it murmurs on its way,
Lit by sunbeams rich and golden—
Morning's flush and closing day—
Tells a story of the ruins,
Both of castles and of walls:
Walls that stand in lonely silence,
Minding us of funeral palls;
Castles only minds have builded
And that eyes have never seen:
Vanished hopes and expectations
Floated out upon the stream,
Drifted down and gone forever;
Tossed upon some far-off sea,
Wrecks they are upon the ocean—
Ocean of Eternity.

And if you will listen calmly,
You can hear the bells at morn
Ringing out across the prairie,
Ringing clearly through the storm;
Through the sunshine and the shadows,
Calling souls to yonder bourn
Where the daylight lengthens ever
And the heart is ne'er forlorn.

In old Lyndon you may wander
Where the pansy borders bloom,
Where the mignonette and roses
Give the zephyrs sweet perfume;
See the stately purple palace
Where the queen of springtime reigns,
And the olives—silent watchers—
And the quiet lover-lanes.

You may stand where morning-glories
Trail the lattice and the dome
Of the children's play-cathedral
On the diamond-covered lawn.
Note the sun-kissed cheek of childhood
Framed within the open door;
Homes of many very lowly,
Blest of God, in that they 're poor.
You may watch the struggle upward
Of the men who seek to climb
On the road which leads to heaven
And its purple peaks sublime.
You may hear the broken whispers
Of the aged; see their tears,
As they tell of golden day-dreams
That have vanished with the years;
Place your hand upon the gray head,
Breathe a prayer,—their blessing said,
May go forth to battle bravely
Till life's golden sun is set.



Sunrise

O golden dawn, that scatters gloom
And brings from heaven's love-lit shore
The promise of eternal day,
I love thee well. Thy message sweet,
Which comes in tones the heart can hear,
Is grander, more sublime, methinks,
Than if the skies were rift in twain
And some great voice should startle men.
So like thou art to all the rest
Of heaven's blessings earth receives,
So manifold thy changing sights:
No sky has plagiarized, and yet
Each day begins with dawn.
And since the voice, "Let there be light,"
How many million morns have lit
The darksome world, and beckoned men
From sleep of death to light of life.
And he who will can drink that flood
Of heaven's glory in his soul,
And rob no man. Can hide each ray
Within his hungry heart,
Nor heaven nor earth shall poorer be.
So do the forests yonder, fields,
And flowers, and prairie hills all catch
The beauteous beams and burst them wide,

Then, gathering up the scattered tints,
Adorn themselves in gorgeous dress;
But dawn is not one ray less bright.

And thou art equal to the task
Of lighting up the darkest world
With ease, as tho' 't were only play.
We little tho't how great thy power
Until we tried to lift thy load.

The darkness fell. Thick darkness crept
Across the face of land and lake;
The valleys first, then far-stretched plains
Were caught away, as by that power
Unseen—yet felt—which casts the pall.
We tho't the mountains and their peaks
So mighty in their majesty,
Would stay the monster by their strength
Or cause it cower in vales below,
From very fear. Not so. It stretched
Its mighty folds about their base;
Then, reaching upward, threw a veil
Upon their heads; then suddenly
A shroud, and shut them from our sight
As tho' forever more.
“But sure,” we tho't, “the clouds above
Are far beyond its reach.”
Yet while the words were on our lips
Their glory fled, their light was gone.
A fear we noted on their face

As when a hand, unseen, from out
The gloom around hath seized the throat.
We closed our eyes a moment from
The sight, and when we looked again
The world was dark; the day was dead;
And night was everywhere.
The accents sweet that loving lips
Had caused to fall upon our hearts,
We heard and felt as in the day,—
The look of love was gone,—the night,
Like jealousy, had come between.
A gentle hand was pressed in ours,
Companions dear were by our side—
For grewsome night we saw them not.
We tho't to go along our way,
But, seeing nothing, fell into
A deep and horrid, slimy pit.
From thence we issued only when
Our strength and hope were well-nigh spent.

Then, when we stood, much worn and weak
With fruitless toil, to find a path,
A gleam was seen a little way
Across a darksome space.
With gropings slow we reached the place,
The substance seized and made a light,
A torch, and lifting it on high,
We tho't to drive the gloom away.
But, O! How feeble was the flame,
How ill revealed what we would see!
A few square rods were dimly lit,—

Beyond were shadows,—shapeless things,
That moved and breathed and rose and fell.
We tho't, "The gods are haunting men;
And hideous things are lurking near.
O, what a fearful world is this!"
The faces by our side each wore
A ghastly look—seen in the glare,
We feared them each; we questioned all,
As in the days when Herod's kin
Or Nero's dwelt uncertain by,
Or tribes and nations slept in peace;
And woke to find the torch applied,
Their families driven forth, themselves
Without a home or friend.
Yet hope abode: a truer light
Would make the world a truer world.

We saw afar, against the clouds,
The lights that other men had lit;
A yellow glow, a feeble flame,
That made the darkness deeper seem,
And hope sank low, for men had spent
Their utmost strength to bring the day;
And night and dread uncertainty
In fear still wrapt the world.
Thro' all the lonely hours of night
The moon and stars did vainly strive
To scatter gloom and give us day.
Their light was dim at very best,
And when the clouds swept o'er their face,
The earth was wrapt in darkest night.



The Bridge that Spans to Either Side

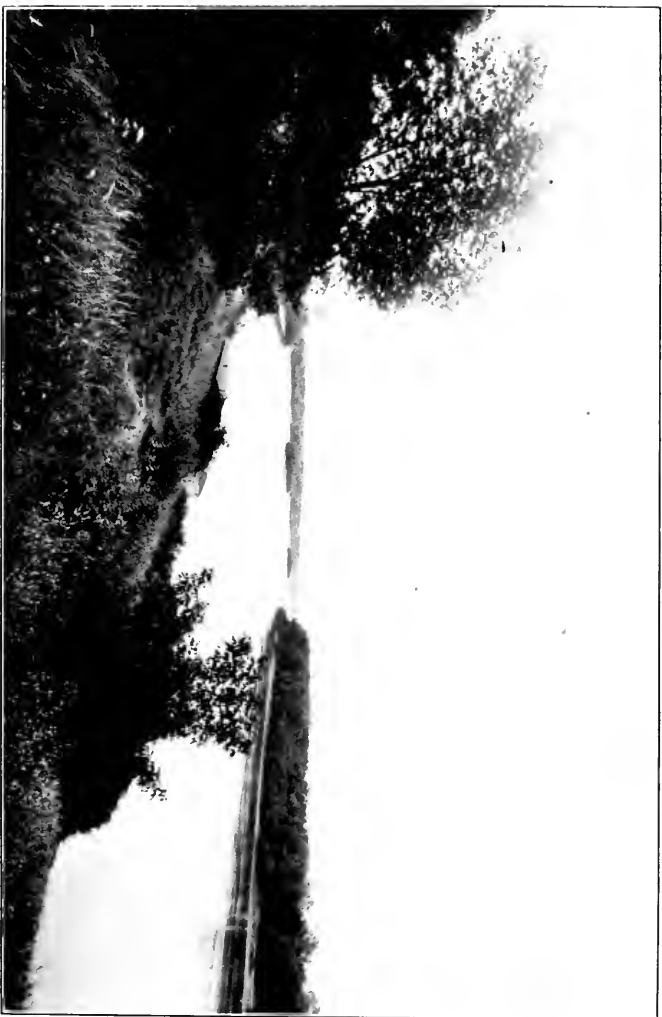
At last, when many hours had passed,
We felt a somewhat in our souls
We scarce could understand: as tho'
Some higher power would give us aid.
We stood with hand upon our lips,
To wait some strange, mysterious change.
The cold, dark disk of far-off blue
Grew darker still, for heaven's lights,
That watched the sleeping world, grew dim.
Then, lo! the Eastern sky began
To wear a faltering tint of light:
So faint, so far, it seemed as if
The soul's deep ear, which catches here
The voices of the sky that speak
In thousand times ten thousand tongues,
Had scarcely heard from ether plains
The golden bugle of the morn
Play taps for stars, and wind the blast
That wakes the artists of the day.

And then a glow along the low
Horizon line. A beam shot up!
A ray of light not man had made!
Another! Yet another! O, a host!
What is it, then? Bright rays which tell
The coming of some greater light.
And while we watched, and while we tho't,
A flood,—so rich! so wondrous bright!
O'erswept the sky. The gloom was gone.
Up leaped the sun in majesty;
In mighty strength: as born of God.

No hand but hand omnipotent
Could wave a torch so vast as that!
Its light was true. The forms about
Each took the shape we earlier knew.
The phantoms fled and vanished quite,
As vapors do before the dawn.

We looked on meadowland and field;
On forests green, where wild flowers grew;
On hills whence came the cattle's low;
We saw the river flowing far;
The bridge that spanned to either side;
The roadways, o'er which men go
At morning time to labors,—sweet
For this: love is their greater hire.
About, the wild birds sang the notes
That shepherds heard from angel lips,
What time the moral hills of earth
Were flooded with that Wondrous Light.
We saw all beauteous things of earth,
That hands of God and man hath made,
And all was love; there was no night;
We cried, "Hath come, the Perfect Light!"

O Christ, we only make one prayer:
"May this day never die.
Let moral darkness come no more.
Shine, Thou, fore'er on high."



The River

The River

Far-flowing and ancient river, by whose meadowed
banks and whose margins

Live and die thro' the ages the members of many races,
Ceaseless thou art in thy roaming from the sparkling
fount to the ocean.

Little heeding the changes that men may work about
thee,

Ever and ever onward, afar thou art flowing, O river.
Cities and towns are growing in numbers unnoted
beside thee,

Expecting to use thy tides and ebbs for the profit of
commerce.

So they may, but thy waters, will tarry only a moment,
Then flow onward again, forgetting the service they
rendered.

Free are thy gifts to the world; uncounted, unledgered
thy blessings.

Ne'er hast thou sought again what men, unthankful,
have borrowed.

Like the rain which falls from the skies when the mists
are rolling above us

Over the thirsty land, that pleads with uplifted verdure;

Like the sunbeams warm and full that float thro'
ethereal spaces,

Seeking the distant clod (which, wandering ever on-
ward,
Ever is guided in going by the strength of its father's
yearnings).

As sings the bird in the tree or the orchard, or, flitting
upward,
Flings to the clouds its song of ineffable music, and
asks not
A penny's pay in return for its service daily rendered.
Like dewdrops and sunbeams and bird song, so does
the wonderful river
Bless the world with its gifts and find its reward in
the blessing.
"Freely thou shalt receive and freely shall give again,"
Didst thou hear the Master say, when He bade thee
leap from thy fountains,
And hast thou learned so well the lesson by men
forgotten?

Whence are thy many waters, tell me, O giver of
blessings?
And a voice, I hear, that is sweet and musical past
description:
Others may call it, "The splash of the waters that
fall at the mill dam,"
But it tells its tale, and to me 't is the answering
voice of the blesser,
Out of the forest's shade and out of the sunlit prairies,
Where, like silvery threads, thro' grasses green are
running

Brooklets and creeks that sing night and day of the
fountains.

Thousand there are that glean in the fields, where the
sunbeams gather

Back the dews and the rain when the clouds have
o'er-blessed the prairies;

Hither they come in a crowd, and pour these count-
less waters.

Whence is thy light, O stream? and the glinting waves
make answer,

Out of the skies above, where the fires are burning
eternal.

And the pathway of gold or of silver that stretches
across the river

If so be, the skies are a-hazed or like amethyst pure
and unsullied,

Points to the orb of day, that burns on the shield of
the morning.

Whence are the waves, O stream, that lap thy shores
forever?

Answer: "The winds have blown sometimes and have
breathed some other."

And the little fountains and springs that come from
thy depths unseen;

Boiling, now here, now there, and dying away in a
wavelet;

Whence are they? Hast thou somewhat down in thy
bosom hid

Of sorrow or pain that makes heartache and brings
to thy features so fair
The lines which the world hath seen on the faces of
mothers and sweethearts
When the stream of their life, flowing onward, has
passed o'er the rough, stony places
Left by the tide of the years and the struggle of men
for possessions?

And the voice of the purling stream, which makes its
music forever,
Tells me all that it has by some other hand hath been
given;
And why should it hold for pay the blessings of earth
and heaven?

Near to the bank of the stream, by the side of its
whispering water,
Grow the wild willow twigs, and the swamp-brush
sprouts in the summer,
Shaggy and thick and unkept and tangled and twisted
together,—
Only the hare or the mink could find a pathway among
them.
Oft have I sat by the bank and looked on the wild,
woolly brushwood,
Useless to man and to stream; unsightly and gross and
forbidding;
Choking the water's way and hindering its onward
going,



*As the lives of men and of women,
Are shaped by the current of years
And the tide of the world's opinions.*



*These have stood upright
When the floods were sweeping about them*

Turning in spring to a curse and a scourge the turbulent waters,
Flooding the lowland farms and drowning the helpless cattle.

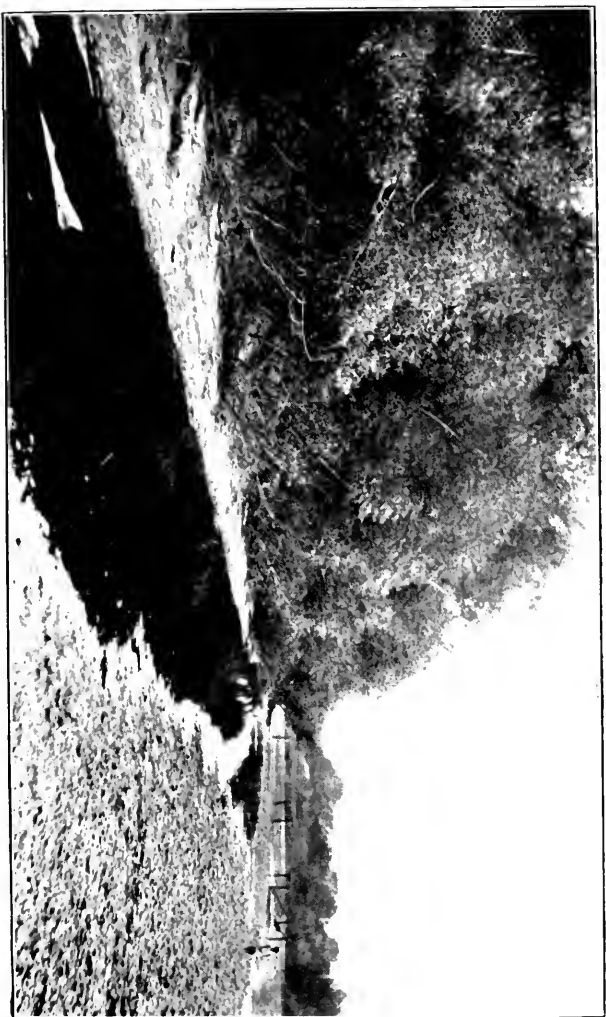
Oft have I marked how the bushes and brush on the bank of the river
Are bent down the way of the stream, as the lives of men and of women
Are shaped by the current of years and the tide of the world's opinions;
But back in the forest beyond, where the oak and the maple and walnut
Lift their trunks to the sky and, stretching their branches upward,
Bid the winds to blow on Æolian harps,—in winter,
Making the silvan song that lulled to sleep the savage,
In summer the murmurs of love that inspire the hearts of lovers;
These have stood upright when the floods were sweeping about them,
Laughed at their foam and fret and caring not for their rushings.
Oft have I wondered, then, when I sat on the bank of the river,
Whether my heart and life will be molded only by others,
Or if they may grow toward the sky, like the kings of the forest yonder.

Few are the sons of men who have seen this wonderful
river;
Only here and there have they watched its flowing
water;
But to know the stream you must journey from its
sea to its fountain,
Under the summer skies and under the clouds of
winter;
Mark when the waters are warm and a bathing place
for the schoolboy;
And when the cakes of ice are floating like rafts in
the river,
Or when on the frozen flood rings the steel of the
skaters.

Note when the water shoals and the pebbles make
mid-summer music;
And when with the springtime flood it is swollen and
rushing onward
Over the lowland fields and drowning the helpless
cattle.
Mark when its mirror reflects the amethyst dome of
the heavens,
And when its surface is splashed with tears the clouds
are weeping
In autumn time for the flowers, which are faded and
gone forever.
Note when the lips of Aurora are kissing its wavelet
brow;
And when the moon and the stars are slumbering calm
on its bosom.



Floating Like Rafts in the River



Midsummer Music

Journey from where the spring creeps out of the bank
of mosses
And, trickling down the rocks, glides along thro' the
meadows.

Follow it all the way in its manifold windings and
turnings
Past the lovers' bank and the dark and unsightly places;
List to its gentle voice purling softly in whispers;
Hear the thunderous tones at the place of its falling
waters;
Note how the shingle-ship of the little child in the
brooklet
Grows to a two-oared skiff for rowing out in the river;
Then to the launch that churns its way along thro'
the water;
And then at last is a vessel whose strength was built
for the ocean.
See all its sights; hear its sounds, from the splashing,
sparkling spring
Out to the windswept sea where the waves are boom-
ing forever.

So with the lives of men who are living and toiling
around us.
Oft times we think that we know their hearts and
pass judgment upon them,
Saying that this one is good and condemning the other
as evil;
Dreaming that this one brings joy and peace to the
heart of the Maker,

Supposing the other, as ill, will receive the reward of
damnation.

But have we seen their life, or only a fragment of
living?

Seen the one when the breath of loving hearts was
upon it;

Seen it when all was calm, and in peace it flowed—
like a river,

Thro' prosperous fields of grain and meadows and
quiet places.

Marked the time in the life when joy and love
abounded.

The other heart we saw when the strivings of life
were upon it,

When sorrow had crushed the soul, or when chill
competition froze it.

Saw it when tempests of sin were sweeping in gusts
around;

And marked the time in that life when grief or hate
were predominant.

So we have judged other lives by only a fragment of
living.

Hap'ly, the One who at last will give the names to
the rivers,

Calling them good or ill, hath been from the sea to
the fountain.



Hidden by Undergrowths, and Covered Over with Lichens

Mill Ruins

On the banks of the flowing river, within sound of its
murmuring waters,

Hidden by undergrowth, and covered over with lichens,
Some of them fallen now and in heaps confusedly lying;
Others standing yet and braving the winds of winter,
Giving a home for birds in the mating days of summer;
Still may be seen the remains of a one time promising
industry.

Fled are the years when it flourished, and gone like a
vision of midnight.

Only in dreams may be heard the thud and roar of
machinery;

Only in dreams may be seen the coming and going of
workmen.

Once 't was a busy place; in the memory of those who
are grayest,

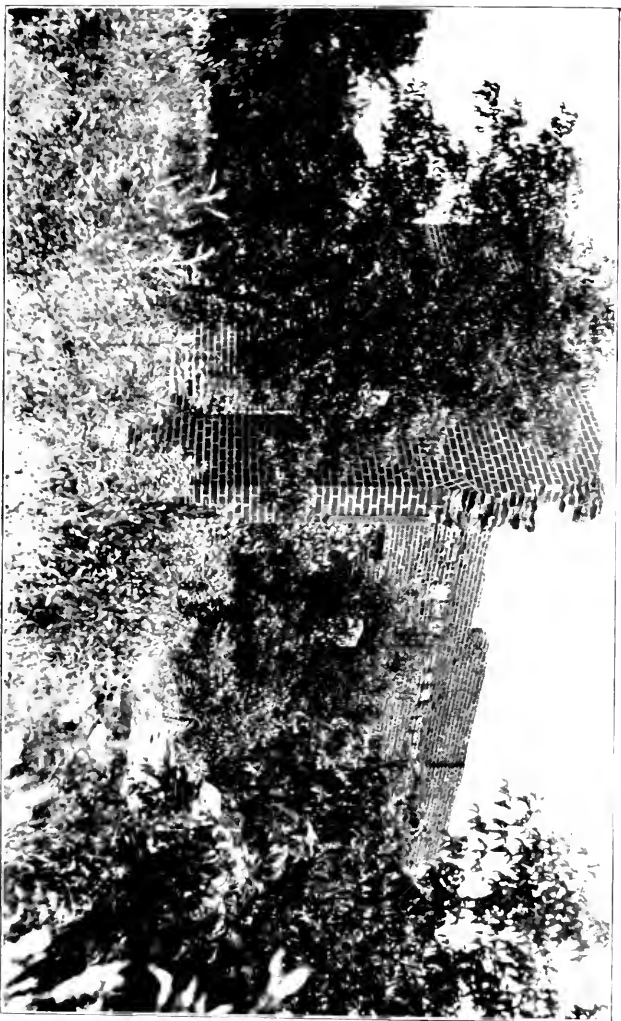
Still of a summer's day is seen the team of the farmer
Coming a-down the lane that was cut thro' the hill
for an entrance;

Still he ties his horse to the iron ring of the door-sill,
What time he waits for the flour,—when the power is
slack for water,—

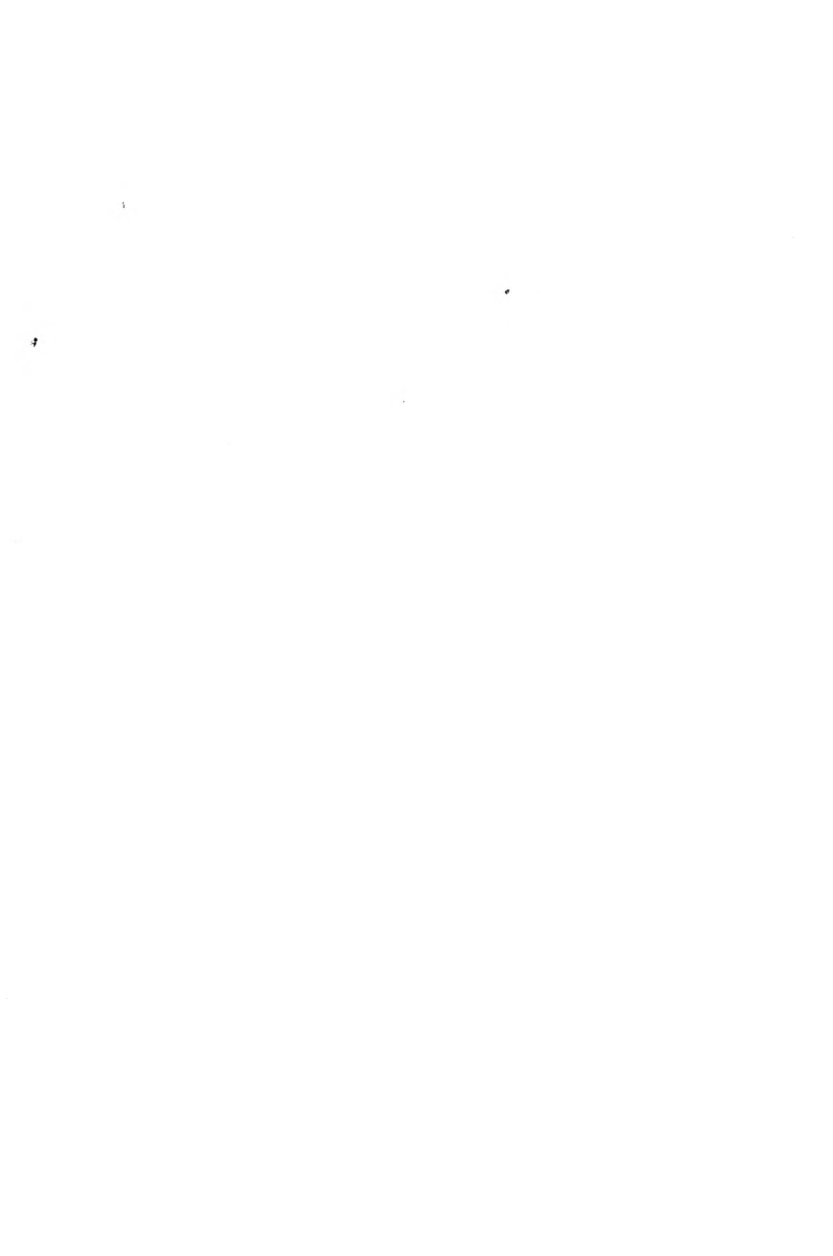
Chatting with neighbor or friend who may chance to
be there before him.

No more the laborer goes, in the gathering gloom of
evening,
Homeward along the bank of the whispering, slow-
moving water,
Swinging his dinner pail and jingling the coins in his
pocket,
Whistling a merry tune and keeping time with his
footstep;
Seeing the lights that shine from the windows of
waiting people,
Knowing a welcome is there and the kindly words of
the housewife.
Silence and loneliness now, where once was the roar
of industry,
Save for the cricket's song at eve in the grasses in
summer,
Or the chatter and bicker of birds when the sparrows
have droved in the autumn.

Silently wait the walls of some of the larger buildings;
Sentinels they, who watch by the graves of those that
are fallen.
Dreamers they are,—of the days when along the bank
of the river
There shall come again a company of men with axes,
With pick and shovel and team,—with implements
made for working;
Gather away the stones and the years' dilapidations,
Open again the race, and build once more the mill-
dam;



Where Once was the Roar of Industry



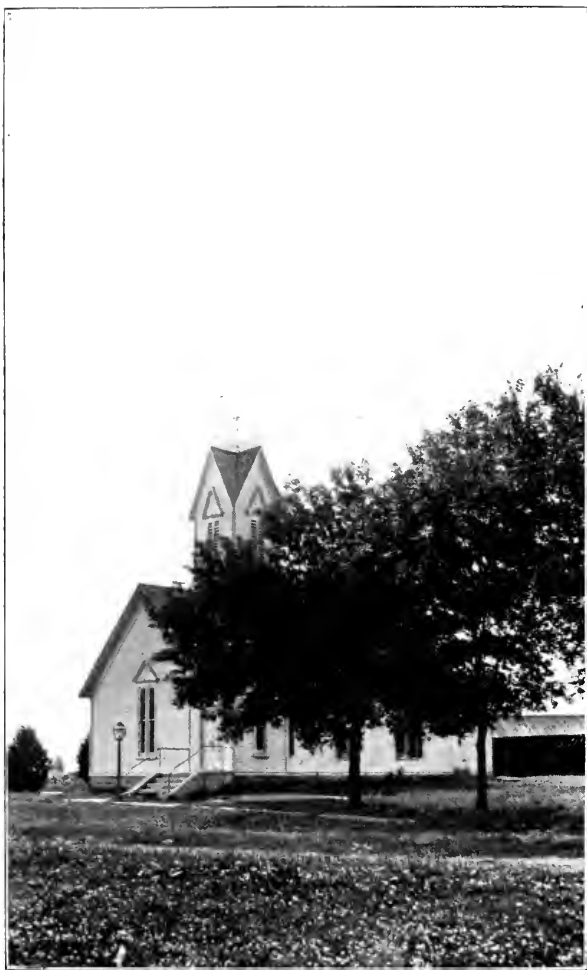
Call the mills from their sleep in their graves by the
 beautiful river,
Bidding them yield to the world the wealth that was
 buried with them.

Oft have I wondered why, thro' the years that have
 speeded swiftly,
This mine of wealth should lie in ruins o'ergrown and
 hidden.
Why no man has come, with money and business am-
 bition;
Spoken the word of charm that will call this genie
 to living;
And received the fabulous wealth which into its power
 is given.
Not for a hundred miles along this grand old river
Is a more delightsome place for a city's site, or a
 mill-dam;
Nor is there anywhere that the latent power is greater.

Yet the way of the world hath ever been thus thro'
 the ages.
Read the story of Rome or of Carthage, or far-away
 India.
Where are the hills that gave birth to the arts of the
 Greeks, the ancients,
The flowers, the birds, and the bees, and the sea, and
 the sky, and the forest,
The countless growing things that touched the hearts
 of the poets?

Or the dawnings of wonderful days that guided the
brush of a Turner?
Are they gone? Are they dead? Or forgotten? Or
hidden behind a veil
And waiting the coming of men with lofty and noble
ambition?

Wait, ye weeping walls that stand by the graves of
your fallen;
We, too, wait for the day that shall give us back our
beloved.
And the world that was wondrous fair and now hath
been wintry for ages,
Hopes for the dawn of the day when Eden shall bloom
and be golden.



*How Sweet Their Tones! No Human Ear e'er heard
A Melody More Grand*

The Bells

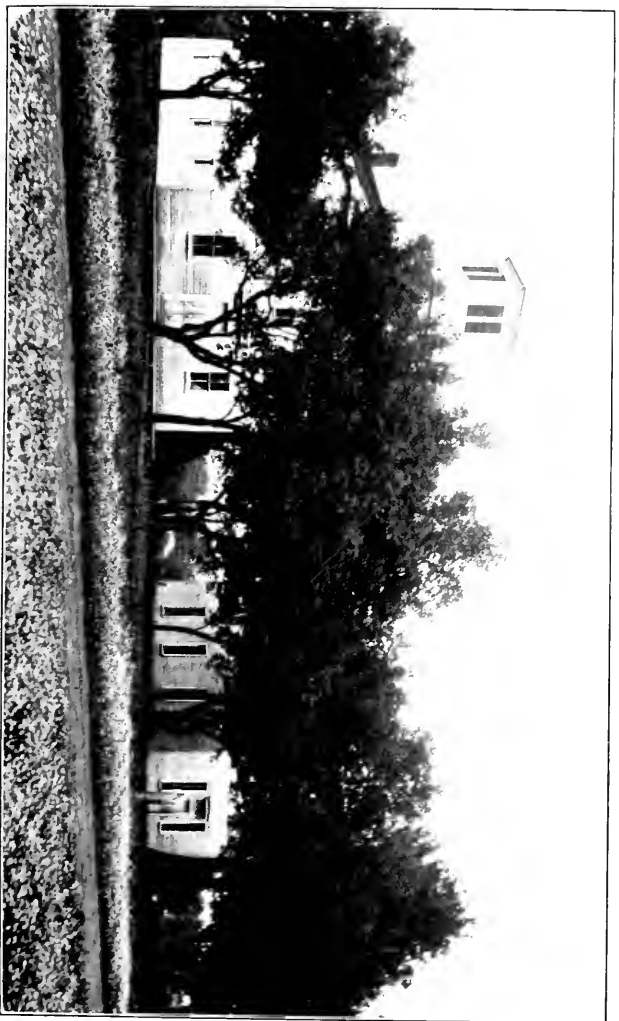
When first November gathers in her lap
The ripened fruit of summer's dew and damp,
When quails are piping in the fields and lanes,
And swift the West wind whirls the weather-vane;
When nights grow long and overlap the days,
And Sol begins to slant his beauteous rays;
When flowers are gone and forests are a-bloom,
And put to shame the horticulturist's groom;
When, manna-like, the frost is on the ground,
And when you catch from far the softest sounds,
Then, first you hear,—the bells.

How sweet their tones! No human ear e'er heard
A melody more grand. No note of bird
Or strain of orchestra, or blare of band,
Or call of bugle held in practiced hand;
No water's fall, no thunder's cannonade,
Nor murmur of the winds in forest glade,
Nor boom of waves on ocean's rock-bound coast,
Or music of the seas, or all the host
That fill the earth with sound to mankind dear,
Which drive away the gloom and bring good cheer,
Can equal this,—the bells.

Their notes are manifold and strangely roll
Across the world, as tho' from ages old.
In childhood's early morn we heard them call,
And questioned, "Whence such wondrous voices fall?"
It seemed a mystic sound we could not understand,
It seemed that they were rung by many hands.
Sometimes so faint, as tho' a feeble voice;
Sometimes so loud, as tho' a battle noise.
We stood, with childish wondering eyes and heart,
And tho't to see the swiftly speeding dart,
That spirit voice,—the bells.

One morn so late, it summer seemed,
When earth was dry and warm, and grasses green,
A laddie trudged the lazy way to school—
And, longing much to break the master's rule,
He came to where an east and southward fence
Did intersect. He felt the blissful sense
Of lazy warmth steal o'er his frame, and there
Threw down his books and coat, all unaware,
Like one of old, that God was in the place
And he, that day, should start to run life's race,
Inspired by—the bells.

From distant pools he heard the froggies sing,
In forest near the birds were on the wing,
The lambs were racing o'er the meadows green;
O'er all the landscape fell a sky-blue sheen.
The air was soft and still, and sounds of spring
And odors sweet from every growing thing
Beguiled his lazy sense and lulled to sleep,
As wagging waves do sailors on the deep.



In Childhood's Early Morn We Heard Them Call



*We stood, with childish, wondering eyes and heart
And tho't to see the swiftly speading dart,
That spirit voice,—the bells.*

A gentle hand passed o'er his drooping eyes,
Dulled every sense but one; that, left alive
To hear a voice—the bells.

They rang. But never as upon that morn.
Ten thousand voices on their notes were borne.
Time's short,—the pen too quickly worn away
To tell of all the message heard that day.
Each hill and vale and crag and mountain peak,
Ocean and coral reef, where divers seek
For pearls; all lands, all lakes, and every glen,
And every place where foot of man hath been,
And what unseen, that future will reveal
When men remember, "Seekers still must kneel,"
Was calling in—the bells.

He heard the voices of the ancient seers;
The poet's song, the wisdom of the years,
The Alexandrian hidden secrets called,
And Pompeii and Herculaneum long impalled,
And Rome and Greece and Nineveh and Ind',
Science and arts that long forgot had been;
And Solon spake, and Euclides again,
And Cræsus told the way to wealth, and Pan
Piped all his secrets forth, and all the world
Of earth and sea and sky found voice and called:
"Rouse up and hear—the bells."

He turned his head as if to heed the voice.
Yet still slept on, as seamen 'mid the noise
Of calling waves, which tell of mysteries.
And as he slept, he dreamed a gentle breeze

Had blown away the morn, and bro't the day,
Divinely set, for men to rest and pray.
And sounds of other bells,—but grander still,
As ocean's music's grander than the rill's,—
Were calling to his half-awakened heart:
"Rouse up from sleep, and from this place depart
And climb where call—the bells."

He list the sound; it came from far away
Beyond the home of stars or night or day.
The music of a countless heavenly throng,
Their songs, their symphonies, were borne along.
He heard the Shepherd Boy on Juda's hill;
The voice of God on Sinai echoed still;
And he who slept on pillow made of stone
At midnight gave his vows before the throne.
That voice which Saul heard on Damascus' road,
And John, on Isle of Patmos, left alone,
Were mingled in—the bells.

All voices sweet that human ears have heard,
Whose music bore the message of God's Word.
The prayer of those who bade revenge be stilled
When fagot blazed and wild beast crushed and killed,
Their vows, who said to fatherland, "Farewell;"
Braved wintry seas and fires fierce as hell,
To worship God. And thousands now unknown,
The good, the true—awoke with thunder tones
The sleeping lad. He heard. And with one breath,
He cried, "Let come what may—or life, or death,
I'll heed that voice—the bells!"



They are Our Friends

The Clouds

They come,—from whence we scarce can tell;
From West, or East, or North, or South
They come,—companions of the winds,
And winds are wanderers o'er all
The endless stretch of earth and sea.
They come to-night from out the West,
But if we hastened to the dim
Horizon line, they still would come.
They grow,—up yonder in the blue,
From little balls of fleecy foam
To mighty billows, blown by winds
And dashed by lightnings into spray
That splashes all the autumn earth.
They are our friends. They shield our homes
From burning rays of noonday sun.

From far-off ocean's fertile fields
They bring rich food for flowers;
For man and beast and bird a drink
Of nectar, fit for heaven's king.
They are the grandest things of earth.
They are the work of God alone.
All else is meant for man to mold,
All else by man is beautified;

These can not be! (But may be blurred
In man's fierce battle for his bread.)
The waste, when godlike men have wrought,
Becomes a paradise again.
But clouds! Man can not add their hue
Nor shape. They need no change. They spring
To form of majesty supreme
In one brief breath of time; and man
Can only stand and gaze in awe,—
What time their hills are crowned with gold.



Late in the Afternoon

Late in the Afternoon

Can it be that the shadows fall to the East!

That the hour's far past the noon!

Is it true that the wild bird seeks its nest?

That the sun will be setting soon?

Ah, me! 'T was only awhile ago

The day was at the dawn,

And we were watching the jewels rare

Which grew on the dewy lawn;

And I was a rollicking, barefoot boy,

With turned-up pantaloons,

Seining the pool for pollywogs,

And whistling merry tunes.

A laddie who loitered the way to school,

Envyng every bird

And the lambs that skipped and played all day,

With never a lesson to learn.

And you were a lassie with hair in curls,

And little, and—O, so afraid!

And dared not climb in the orchard tree,

Where the robin's nest was made.

It seems but a little while ago

That we sat on father's knee

And he rocked us to sleep, or told us tales

Of when he was a lad at sea.

Your eyes but yesterday were bright,
Your cheeks as rosy as dawn;
And when I lifted you over the rough,
You said, "You are so strong."

But I note that the light is fading now;
And you hold the book away;
And you walk so slow; and your voice is low—
You were blithe as a bird yesterday.

And me? My hand will tremble now,
And I can not lift the load.
It must be true, that we're growing old!
It's the western slope of the road.

I was looking again at the pictures, to-day,
That we keep on the mantel shelf;
The faces of boys and girls whom we loved
In the days when they were our wealth.

Our faces are growing wrinkled now,
And theirs—are still so fair!
And I wondered how it will be in the day
When we meet again—up there.

Have they always been children in God's dear home?
We are told, "They never grow old."
Will it be little hands we shall clasp again,
In the city whose streets are of gold?

Dear heart, I think that we soon shall know,
For the hour is getting late;
And dimly I see in the evening dawn
Some one by the open gate.



A Place of Peace

Sunset

A touch of gold on the Western world,
In the East a fading light.
And far on high,
In the wondrous sky,
The guardians of the night!

The winds are fallen fast asleep;
Their journey now is o'er;
They came from afar
Where the sea nymphs are,
O'er prairie and mountain and moor.

The billowy fields of growing grain,
That answered the wild winds call,
Are hushed to rest
On the prairie's breast
By its cadence's rise and fall.

The wood that was music all the day,
And wondrous with light and shade,
Is dark and still,
Save the whip-poor-will
That calls from the lonely glade.

Along the path in the old farm lane
The cattle wind their way,
And lazily drink
At the river's brink,
Ere they give for their pasture their pay.

The hour of peace comes to all our world,
That Sabbath of every day,
Which bids toil cease
And which gives release
To the weary on life's way.

And the day that is done with the setting sun,
How hath this day been spent?
As He would love
Who dwells above
And whose kindly aid was lent?

Dear Savior, if one more day be ours,
Teach us to better be.
Our days are fewer;
Help us be truer
To ourselves, to the right, and to Thee.

And if to us the sun that is set
Hath bidden its last "good-night,"
O, bear us away,
We humbly pray,
To the land where Thou art the Light.



Who Planted the Flowers on "The Indian's Grave?"

The Sun is Set, and They Sleep Until the Dawn of the Day



